

**ELECTROSURGICAL APPARATUS AND METHODS FOR CUTTING TISSUE****ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

The present invention provides systems, apparatus, and methods for dissecting, resecting, severing, cutting, contracting, coagulating, or otherwise modifying a tissue or organ of a patient. An apparatus of the invention includes an electrosurgical probe configurable between an open configuration and a closed configuration, the probe including an active electrode terminal, a fixed return electrode disposed proximal to the active electrode terminal, and a movable return electrode configured to move linearly with respect to the active electrode terminal between the open configuration and the closed configuration. A method of the present invention comprises clamping a blood vessel between the active electrode terminal and the movable return electrode, coagulating the clamped blood vessel by application of a first high frequency voltage, and severing the coagulated blood vessel by application of a second high frequency voltage.